

Medieval and Post Medieval Archaeology in the Mediterranean ~ an official interest group of the archaeological institute of america

Minutes: Archaeological Institute of America Annual Meeting 2009

11 Sunday, Jan 2009

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Medieval and Post-Medieval Archaeology in Greece (MAPMAG) Interest Group Archaeological Institute of America, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, PA

Attending

David Pettegrew, R. Scott Moore, Amelia Brown, Effie Athanassopoulos, William Caraher, Maria Georgopoulou, Heather Grossman, Glenn Bugh, Jon Frey, Timothy Gregory, Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, Phyllis Graham, Carolyn Snively, Tracey Cullen, Kostis Kourelis

I. Introduction

David welcomed members to the 2009 AIA IG meeting and apologized for the incredibly early meeting time. The two main issues of business for the meeting were to: 1) update the group on its activities during 2008 and 2) discuss paper session for the 2010 AIA meetings, as well as other conferences.

Our meeting began at 7:15 AM when it appeared that the last of the members had arrived.

II. Report on the Activities of the Group

Kostis Kourelis reported on the activities of the group in 2008, which focused on the good news about the publication of two previous AIA sessions sponsored by the MAPMAG IG: 1) the archaeology of abandonment (AIA 2007), and 2) the archaeology of Xenitia (AIA 2008).

Kostis updated members on the publication of the paper session on the archaeology of abandonment held at the AIA meetings in January 2007. The special issue of the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* should go into production in late 2009 or perhaps even early 2010.

Last year's AIA session on Xenitia will be published in record time by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in Issue 10 of *The New Griffon* (Athens: The Gennadius Library). Only a year after the session, it is set to come out in early January 2009. Thanks to Maria Georgopoulou, Jack Davis, Charles

Watkinson and the ASCSA publication office at Princeton, and all the contributors for making this happen in record time.

III. Future MAPMAG Sessions

The major order of business was deciding on future sessions at the AIA and other conferences. David began by briefly reviewing ideas proposed during the 2008 IG meeting including 1) a colloquium session on Teaching the History of the Post-Classical World, 2) a session on Early Travelers to Greece, and 3) a session on the archaeology of national identity in Greece. Kostis mentioned the possibility of organizing an archaeology session for the Modern Greek Studies Association (Oct. 15-17, 2009) in Vancouver, Canada. And Heather Grossman proposed an AIA session on the comparative archaeology of monasticism at the AIA in Anaheim, CA, in 2010, organized either thematically (e.g., land use, landscape) or chronologically (Late Antique-Modern), with a comparative scope (eastern and western medieval).

Then the discussion began.

Our conversation revolved around three issues:

- 1) Whether we could organize a session for the MGSA in time for the deadline (Jan. 15 for individual papers, Jan. 25 for organized panel proposals). Effie suggested that the previously proposed topic on the archaeology of national identity would be suitable for this conference.
- 2) Whether there was interest in a session on post-antique travelers to Greece.
- 3) How we would organize a comparative archaeology of monasticism panel: thematically or chronologically, with one session or two, and with what geographic scope?

In respect to #1, the group was interested in the idea of running an IG session at an organization like the MGSA or SAA, and Effie volunteered the topic of the archaeology of national identity provided that someone would collaborate with her in organizing it and group members would give papers. Amelia, Heather, and Bill, Lita and David said they could submit paper proposals for this session idea. The only drawback to organizing something for the MGSA was the immediate deadline (Jan. 25). Another possibility was to submit this proposal to the subsequent meeting of the MGSA in 2011, or as Heather recommended, the next BSC in Chicago.

Members expressed strong interest in the post-antique travelers to Greece session, although no one at the time of the meeting was ready to organize the session. We made no commitments to this idea but in effect decided to keep this idea on the table.

Members spent considerable time discussing the third idea, the comparative archaeology of monasticism. Heather proposed the topic as a way for the MAPMAG IG to make connections beyond our own group with scholars working in other disciplines, organizations, and geographic areas, and Heather proposed a double session, organized chronologically (e.g., Late Antique-Early Medieval, Late Medieval Modern) or thematically (e.g., economy, landscape).

Everyone liked the concept of establishing connections to other groups who are interested in the archaeology of the post-antique world, but there was considerable discussion about whether the AIA would support or handle two sessions, or might reject one of the session proposals, and also whether we wanted to support 1 broad panel or 2 panels. Bill suggested that that we could support a double session across conferences—for example, an AIA IG panel at the Kalamazoo Conference in May, or the

Byzantine Studies Conference in October—as a way of connecting bridges to other organizations. Glenn suggested that given the current economic climate and the cutting of travel funds, it might be prudent to limit ourselves to one panel. Carolyn proposed that we could emphasize a period like Late Antiquity (over later periods) in order to draw an audience from individuals who already attend the AIA. Bill proposed the practical idea of using the internet to post the podcasts of sessions held in different locations and getting feedback online—as a first step toward publishing the papers.

The conversation continued about the merits of limiting the scope of the panel in various ways, whether chronologically (to Late Antiquity), spatially (e.g., to Greece and the E. Mediterranean), or thematically (e.g., burial; the holy man). Heather responded that the session could be organized in other ways, such as by common themes that would draw people interested in early and later periods of monasticism: e.g., monastic landscapes and land use, vs. systems of living and social organization.

Glenn raised the issue of whether the comparative emphasis of the session would detract from the IG's explicit geographic focal point (Greece), and Amelia and Glenn suggested that focusing the topic on Greece would still work while also being true to the interest group. This spawned conversation about the group's identity. As Bill and Kostis suggested, members work in Greece but their interests also lie in Macedonia, Italy, Cyprus, and Turkey and we are, in effect, both an interest group centered on Greece and one with broader geographic interests. Heather answered that the comparative focus of the proposed monasticism session would in any case help to broaden our appeal and would help us think in terms of broader connections.

Tracey added that the group should think about this entire conversation in terms of potential future publication; a single session and geographic focus, for example, would make a more coherent publication issue. Kostis reminded the group of the hard work and challenges of putting together a conference session that is due at the end of March. Publicizing the paper session and finding participants must occur in advance of the session submission deadline (March 30 for the AIA).

The group ended by supporting the idea of a single session for the archaeology of monasticism (with a thematic focus) as well as the other ideas (nationalism and post-antique travel) discussed in the business meeting.

There were no other matters of business and our meeting concluded at 8:25 AM, just in time for members to run to the Late Antiquity session down the hall! Thanks to all who contributed to our meeting.

Submitted by David K. Pettegrew

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